

DC 202 - History of Motion Picture Editing WI 2019

Instructor

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Course Information

DC202-510(Distance) - Class videos posted T/TH evening

Course Website D2L

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course studies the origins and rise of film editing as an art form, an industry, a set of technological practices ranging from analog film to digital video. The course examines critical historical events that impacted film editing: the emergence of the studio system, the coming of sound, narrative, experimental and documentary film, MTV, and audience shifts. For many, editing is the unique source of the art of filmmaking. This course addresses this question. Prerequisite(s): None

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. A thorough understanding of the Film Editor's craft and its impact on filmmaking.
2. A historical perspective on the nature of the technology and art.

LEARNING DOMAIN DESCRIPTION

DC 202 The History of Motion Picture Editing is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Arts and Literature domain. Courses in the Arts and Literature domain ask students to extend their knowledge and experience of the arts by developing their critical and reflective abilities. In these courses, students interpret and analyze particular creative works, investigate the relations of form and meaning and through critical and/or creative activity to come to experience art with greater openness, insight, and enjoyment. These courses focus on works of literature, art, theatre, or music as such, though the process of analysis may also include social and cultural issues. Students who take course in this domain choose three courses from such choices as literature, the visual arts, media arts, music, and theater. No more than two courses can be chosen from one department or program.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a work of art is about and/or how it was produced.
2. Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in a work.
3. Students will be able to assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.
4. Students will be able to contextualize a work of art. They will be able to do so with respect to other works of art in terms of defining its place within a broader style or genre. They will also be able to contextualize a work of art in terms of contemporaneous aesthetic, social, or political concerns, discussing how these might shape the work's reception and how that reception might differ amongst various peoples and historical periods.

Students will be able to analyze and comment on the various elements, forms, and styles of motion picture editing through written assignments, in-class presentations, and a creative assignment. Details of the assignments are provided on D2L.

Requirements and Evaluation

Look at assignment guidelines for detailed breakdown.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Scene Analysis 20%

Genre Analysis 20%

Editor as Auteur analysis or Creative assignment 20%

Quizzes 20%

Attendance & Participation (posting) 20%

TOTAL 100%

Letter grades will be based on the minimum percentages of total points earned

A - 100% -- 94%

A- 93% -- 90% Excellent

B+ 89% -- 87% Very Good

B 86% -- 83% Good

B- 82% -- 80%

C+ 79% -- 77% Satisfactory

C 76% -- 73%

C- 72% -- 70%

D 69% -- 60%

F 59% -- 0%

GRADING

Grades and/or written feedback will be given for each assignment. In order to be accepted for grading, assignments must be turned in on time (all deadlines are on the syllabus and on D2L). Late work will receive zero points for grading. An assignment worth 10 points (10%) is equal to one full letter grade. Failure to turn in even one assignment has a significant impact on your grade. Class Format Class meetings will involve screenings, discussions, lectures, critique, and presentations.

WRITING EXPECTATIONS

Students will be expected to complete a minimum of 5-7 pages of writing for this course. Students will write at least two analytical/research papers (3 - 5 pages) based on guidelines provided by the instructor.

Handouts and assignment guidelines will be posted on D2L. Please ensure that you have access to D2L. No paper handouts will be given in class unless requested.
NO REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

CONTENT CHANGES – This syllabus may be amended as the course proceeds. You will be notified of all changes. As the semester progresses, some items may change at the instructor's discretion, but the overall workload will not. Make sure you pace yourself accordingly.

DATES & DEADLINES WQ 2019:

January 11 (11:59pm) Last day to add/swap classes

January 18 Last day to drop classes with no penalty Last day to select pass/fail option

February 22 Last day to Withdraw from classes

March 15 End of Day and Evening classes

March 16 Begin WQ19 Day and Evening final exams

Week One

OBJECTIVE

To define and demonstrate fundamental editing terms and concepts and illuminate the roots and early history of editing.

TOPICS

Introductions. What is Editing? Goals of Editing. Basic Terms. Pre-Cinema, Earliest Films/Techniques. The Shot as the basic unit of a cinematic language.

SCREEN

Various Clips/Shorts, Early shorts from Edison, Lumiere Brothers, Melies; William S. Porter; Cecil Hepworth The Horse That Bolted; The Sick Kitten;

READ

The Cinema of Attractions by Tom Gunning
Glossary of Editing Terms. Ken Dancyger

Week Two (Online Quiz Due by end of week)

OBJECTIVE

To outline the evolution of the role of the Editor; basic shots and their relationships to an evolving population of movie audiences. Understand cinema as a time-based medium.

TOPICS

Who edits movies; basic shots and transitions; concept of story time, plot time and screen time.

SCREEN

The Cutting Edge, part 1 & 2; Alice Guy; Lois Weber; D.W. Griffith; Victor Sjöström;

READ

The Annihilation of Space and Time: Rebecca Solnit on How Muybridge Froze the Flow of Existence, Shaped Visual Culture, and Changed Our Consciousness. Book Review by Maria Popova.

Week Three (DUE: Shot by Shot Analysis outline)

OBJECTIVE

Contextualize the life and contributions of D.W. Griffith to early cinematic language and the rise of the continuity system and the ways these have impacted the social and cultural spheres.

TOPICS

D.W. Griffith; development of the temporal and spatial dimensions of cinema along emotional and ideological lines.

SCREEN

Various Griffith shorts and excerpts from Birth of a Nation; Intolerance; Way Down East. Lois Weber's Suspense; Cecil B. DeMille's The Squaw Man.

READ

Way Down East, The Rescue. An editing shot by shot analysis of several scenes from Griffith's film.

Week Four (DUE: ASSIGNMENT ONE: SHOT BY SHOT ANALYSIS)

OBJECTIVE

Understand how editing was evolving outside of US movie culture, the ways that world events shaped the evolution of editing including WWI and The Bolshevik Revolution.

TOPICS

Avant-garde cinema; French National Cinema; Soviet Montage

SCREEN

Strike; October; Battleship Potemkin; The Man With A Movie Camera; The Last Laugh; The Seashell and The Clergyman; La Roue; Napoleon

READ

The Third Meaning. Roland Barthes; Screen documentary on Alice Guy Blache.

Week Five (Online Quiz Due by end of week)

OBJECTIVE

Appreciate the role of editing in the development of silent comedy and the visionary silent comedic directors/actors. Gain perspective on the technologies and creative concepts that drove the transition to sound cinema.

TOPICS

Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton; Eric Von Stroheim; Cecil B. DeMille and King Vidor

SCREEN

Various Chaplin and Keaton Shorts; City Lights; The General; Queen Kelly; Dynamite; The Crowd; Love Me Tonight; A Nous La Liberte; The Jazz Singer; Lights of New York; Scarface; Trouble in Paradise

READ

The Lubitsch Touch. Raymond Durgnat; *Chaos, Magic, Physical Genius and the Art of Silent Comedy* by Robert Sklar. Walter Murch Interview transcript.

Week Six (DUE: Genre Study Outline)

OBJECTIVE

Appreciate how non-fiction filmmaking had an impact on the development of editing techniques and in turn, the ways that editing has shaped our conceptions of non-fiction or documentary. Part One.

TOPICS

Actualities; Science; Motion Studies; Robert Flaherty; John Grierson; Pare Lorentz; War cinematography and the development of 16mm technology; Cinema Verite.

SCREEN

Muybridge; Lumiere; Painleve; Flaherty; Grierson; Lorentz; Lindsay Anderson; Chronicle of a Summer.

READ

Documentary Modes by Bill Nichols

Week Seven

OBJECTIVE

Further explore modes of documentary to understand how approaches to editing lie at the intersection of cinematic innovation. Connect the idea of subjectivity to the act of cutting and the role of the editor as narrator in non-fiction and experimental documentary.

TOPICS

Maysles Brothers; Jill Godmilow; Trin T. Min Ha; Chantal Akerman; Emile de Antonio; Harvard Sensory Ethnography Lab

SCREEN

Salesman; Far From Poland; The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On; Reassemblage; Letters from Home; In The Year of The Pig; Leviathan; Maidan

READ

Kill The Documentary As We Know It by Jill Godmilow

Week Eight (Online Quiz Due by end of week)

OBJECTIVE

Interrogate alternative reactions to the systematized editing techniques of western filmmaking. Examine cinematic innovations from India, France and Japan in a post-war, post-colonial context.

TOPICS

Italian Neo-Realism; The French New Wave; Satyajit Ray; Ousmane Sembene; Akira Kurosawa and Yasujiro Ozu

SCREEN

Rome, Open City; Breathless; Apu Trilogy; Cloud Capped Stars; Black Girl; Rashomon; Tokyo Story

READ

La Camera Stylo by Alexander Astruc & *Postwar Cinema Beyond The West* (excerpt from Film History) by Kristin Thomson and David Bordwell.

Week Nine

OBJECTIVE

To consider the impact of video, commercials, MTV and the digital revolution on editing concepts and practices. Explore the function of the editor in experimental found footage/appropriation/collage films.

TOPICS

Special Effects and editing; Television; Internet Streaming and YouTube; Consumerism and the fictionalization of the universe.

SCREEN

Children of Men; The Revenant; F for Fake; A Movie; Schmeerguntz; Alien Anomalies Under The Sun

READ

Stealing Pictures by Mike Hoolbloom.

Week Ten

DUE: Final Project Presentations

Week Eleven (finals week)

DUE: Final Project

Assignment One: Scene Analysis (20% of final grade)

Outline due - Week Three (discussion post)

Scene synopsis, shot-by-shot breakdown and 2-5 page analysis due - Week Four

For this assignment you will be breaking down a scene within a feature film into it's individual shots in order to discern how the editing of the scene constructs the meaning, advances the plot and reveals character.

1. Choose a feature film that appeals to you. This could be a favorite film, one you've been wanting to delve into or a film that has always seemed too distant for whatever reason i.e. foreign language, genre, personal tastes. Screen the film at least once and choose a representative scene. (Consult the Glossary of Terms for determining what a scene is. Pro tip: If your film is available on DVD consult the chapters which are usually broken down by scene). Write a brief one to two paragraph synopsis of the film and then the scene you've chosen.

2. Now that you've selected your scene from within the film, begin the process of creating a shot-by-shot breakdown. You are free to make your own spreadsheet or table but you can also use the sample provided. Using a watch, stopwatch or digital frames counter, isolate each shot and enter values for the following categories: Run time; Focal Distance; Height and Angle; Movement of the frame; Transition at end of shot to the next; general description of what's in the frame.

3. Using the shot-by-shot breakdown proceed to write a 2-5 page analysis of the scene focusing on the editing techniques, styles and strategies you observe. Take into account the film's overall style and tone when asserting ideas about your scene's editing choices. Remember that editing is always interdependent upon all the formal elements of a film, which means that you cannot avoid discussing the film's use of visual design or mise-en-scene, sound, cinematography and lighting. Try to focus your main ideas and assertions onto the subtextual themes and character attributes you detect as well as the practical demands of telling the story.

On Week Three you will present your film, the scene you chose and why you have chosen them as a discussion post. You may also briefly discuss any preliminary findings you have made at this point. This is also a good opportunity to ask questions of your peers if you have any. Online students will also submit their outline as a discussion post.

The written components of the assignment must be uploaded no later than our Thursday session of week four.

Assignment Two: The Editor as Auteur (20% of final grade)
Outline Due: Week Six (discussion post)
Final written analysis due on the Thursday of Week Seven.

For this assignment you will be examining the work of a single editor, conducting an analysis of their editing styles and techniques and asserting ideas about that editor's overall style as a visionary force behind the films they edit and the directors they collaborate with.

1. Choose an editor and compile a filmography of their work.
2. Conduct research and write a brief biography for your editor. Remember to cite your sources for the biography.
3. Choose two or more films that will allow you to thoroughly analyze and discuss the editor's style, evolution, innovations etc. Screen these films and take notes using your new shot by shot breakdown skills.
4. Write a 3-5 page analysis of the editor's overall style, making the case that we should understand that style as part of the overall authorship or vision of the film. For example, in what ways has the life and editing techniques used by Thelma Schoonmaker shaped our understanding of Martin Scorsese's filmic style.

Assignment Three: Editing Styles by Genre (20% of final grade)
Outline Due: Week Ten (In Class and Discussion Post)
Final 3-5 page research and analysis paper due during finals (week eleven).

For this assignment you will be examining a specific genre and discerning editing patterns, styles and strategies that underscore or form the basis of genre conventions.

1. Choose a genre and at least three representative films from that genre. Try and choose films that represent three distinct eras of that genre. Screen the films and take notes regarding the editing patterns or innovations you detect. Rely on your work from assignment one to help identify patterns, styles and strategies of editing.
2. Conduct some outside research. Genre studies often rely on tracking the subtle and not so subtle shifts in editing techniques to mark major shifts and/or minor innovations. Does your genre have any editing tropes such as action films and the overlapping edit (see Jackie Chan), or Westerns and the climactic gunfights rhythmic, tension building editing. Use this scholarly research to help hone your points and familiarity with ways that scholars write about film, and editing in particular. Make sure to record and track your research for your papers works cited and bibliography pages.

Present your preliminary findings and outline in a discussion post on Week Six.

3. Compose your 3-5 page analysis of your genres dominant editing styles, techniques and strategies over history. Be sure to organize your analysis around a central idea or theme that you feel resonates with your screening notes and research. Be sure to include a works cited page and a bibliography (these do not count toward the 3-5 pages).

COURSE POLICIES: In addition to the DePaul University college policies, the following policies apply to this course

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES – Each student is responsible for their time management and meeting the expectations in the syllabus. The instructor is not responsible for reminding students of assignment deadlines in class. In the event of an absence it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor for details of the homework if 'assignment' is listed on the syllabus – you are still responsible for completing the assignment on time.

DEADLINES – Media production requires strict adherence to deadlines, therefore late assignments will not be accepted for grading and written feedback will be given at the instructor's discretion. You will not be eligible for an 'A' in the class unless you turn in all assignments on time.

ATTENDANCE – Attendance and attention in class are mandatory. Any absence (missing more than 15 minutes of class time per session) will impact your grade. Each student is allowed ONE unexcused absence before your grade is affected. If you are sick, please contact me by email prior to missing a class due to illness and continue to keep me posted until you return. As long as I am aware of your situation and you take an active role in catching up, absences may be excused and extensions may be granted. Every situation will be handled according to individual circumstance at the instructor's discretion. Absolutely no consideration will be given for those who request special treatment without advanced notice, even with a doctor's note.

COMPUTER USE – Using the computer during class time for any reason other than taking notes will have a negative impact on your participation grade.

EXAMINATIONS – Students who do not take exams during the regularly scheduled time will receive a failing grade for the exam unless they have contacted the instructor in advance to arrange for a make-up exam. Students contacting the instructor after the exam has been given will not be allowed to make-up the exam for any reason. Make-up exams will be administered by the College according to its make-up exam schedule.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY – Plagiarism on assignments or cheating on exams are serious offenses and earn the student a failing grade for the class. Please read the Academic Integrity Policy (AIP) at: <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/handbook/code16.html>.

READING ASSIGNMENTS – The assigned readings offer an opportunity for independent learning that supplements the lectures. Lectures will introduce material not available in the readings, and the readings will explore concepts not mentioned in class. The exam will cover both lecture and reading materials.

INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY – Please email or call any time you have a question or concern about the class. If you do not hear back from me within 24 hours, it means I did not receive your message so please check the address or phone number and contact me again. If you are unable to meet during my office hours, contact me to make other arrangements.

COLLEGE POLICIES

Online Course Evaluations

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in CampusConnect.

Academic Policies

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the University Academic Calendar. Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment.

Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: csd@depaul.edu.

Lewis Center

1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.
Phone number: (312)362-8002
Fax: (312)362-6544
TTY: (773)325.7296

WK	Assignment	Due by	Completed ?
1	N/A		
2	Quiz #1	End of Week Two	
3	Assignment #1 Outline	In Class and/or Online Post	
4	Assignment #1 3-5 page paper	End of Week Four	
5	Quiz #2	End of Week Five	
6	Assignment #2 Outline	In Class and/or Online Post	
7	Assignment #2 3-5 page paper	End of Week Seven	
8	Quiz #3	End of Week Eight	
9	N/A		
10	Assignment #3 Presentation in class or Online	In class Week Ten	
11	Final Paper	End of Finals Week	

